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SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, S/CRS, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/C  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: SLA/UNITY AND SLA/AW APPEAR INTERNALLY DIVIDED

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. On June 26, the SLA/Unity's erratic spokesman, Mahjoub Hussein, told poloff in London that his rebel movement is planning a massive attack ("the flood") on Khartoum. In a separate meeting with Hussein's colleague, SLA/Unity's Humanitarian coordinator Suliman Jamous said he was not aware of any plan, and cautioned that Hussein is "often doing his own thing." Meanwhile, in a separate meeting with poloff, SLA/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) London representative Yahia Bashir stated that the international community should empower voices other than Abdul Wahid's as "the future of the Fur people cannot be decided just by one person." These examples demonstrate significant internal division in SLA/Unity and SLA/AW, especially in comparison to the organized and integrated Justice and Equality Movement. END SUMMARY.

SLA/AW

¶2. (SBU) On June 26, Yahia Bashir, the London political representative for SLA/Abdul Wahid, stated that although he supports Abdul Wahid Al-Nur and still considers him to be the legitimate leader of SLA, that the international community and the media need to listen to and empower other voices in the movement. "The international community has built up Abdul Wahid by only asking for his opinion and that is one of the reasons why we are stuck in this place. The future of the Fur people cannot be decided just by one person" stated Bashir. Bashir said that there are some SLA field commanders and political leaders who constitute an important element of SLA that need to be consulted. Bashir stated that the AU/UN and the wider international community need to share information about meetings and their plans more widely. He stated that "if we all know what is going on, we might be able to change Abdul Wahid's mind on some things."

¶3. (U) BIO NOTE: Yahia Bashir is from Wadi Salih in southwest Darfur. He studied business administration in Khartoum University, and became active in student politics. Since 2005 he has been in London working for SLA/AW.

SLA/UNITY

¶4. (SBU) On June 26, poloff met the spokesman for SLA/Unity Mahjoub Hussein. Hussein claimed that he would be traveling to Paris on June 27 to meet French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner in a private meeting. (Note: Attempts to contact Hussein after June 27 to see if the meeting took place have not been successful. End Note.) After strongly criticizing all other rebel movements, Hussein claimed that SLA/Unity is coordinating a massive attack on Khartoum under the operational name, the "flood" (toufan). "I can't tell you the date, but it is coming," stated Hussein. Hussein was not optimistic about the prospects for negotiations saying, "the rifle is currently the only way right now." Mahjoub stated that "this will be the last operation we undertake, whether it is for good or for bad. We will either be free or be slaves."

¶5. (SBU) (NOTE: Although a prominent rebel leader since the beginning of the conflict and still widely interviewed by international journalists, Hussein appeared eccentric, imbalanced,

and erratic. Hussein was 1.5 hours late for the meeting with poloff, made many exaggerated statements, and smelled of alcohol. Poloff asked the Joint Mediation Support Team's Boubou Niang and Muin Shrim about their opinion of Hussein and they replied that that they no longer consulted Hussein due to his lack of credibility. Other rebel leaders from JEM and the London Sudanese expatriate community stated that Hussein has an alcohol problem. END NOTE.)

¶6. (SBU) On June 28, Suliman Jamous, the Humanitarian Coordinator for SLM/Unity, urged caution with respect to Mahjoub's claim of an impending attack and his upcoming meeting with Foreign Minister Kouchner, saying "I don't always know what Mahjoub is up to." Contrary to Hussein's militaristic vision, Jamous stated that "there is no military solution to the problems of Darfur - the only military way is to remove Bashir, and that is not realistic at this point." Jamous stated that SLA/Unity is ready for negotiations with the government, and that he has conveyed this message to the Joint Mediation Support Team. Jamous stated that "the Government of Sudan puts forward the idea that no rebel movement is ready for negotiations, even though that is not true."

¶7. (SBU) Jamous stated that his current priority is unifying the rebel movements. Jamous stated that there are only four significant movements at this point (JEM, SLA/AW, SLA/Unity, and URF.) He stated that URF is quickly losing influence. He stated that Adam Bakhit has run out of fighters and that the GoS bought out groups of URF fighters to participate in the attack in Chad. According to Jamous, it is likely that the remaining movements in the URF coalition will join SLA/Unity. Jamous stated that he occasionally speaks with JEM's Khalil Ibrahim, but that Abdul Wahid refuses to speak with him. He did note, however, that he is in direct communication with many of Abdul Wahid's field commanders.

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¶8. (SBU) Jamous characterized (his distant relative and rival) Minni Minnawi as a selfish leader "whose time is done." Jamous said that he is not in communication with Minnawi, but that many of Minnawi's field commanders have joined SLA-Unity in recent months. For example, stated Jamous, the top field commander for SLA-Minnawi in Muhajariyya, Babiker Salah Abdalla, recently defected and joined SLA-Unity.

¶9. (SBU) Jamous stated that he has more influence within SLM-Unity than its leader Abdallah Yahia (who is currently in Libya, stated Jamous). Jamous stated that Unity's Othman Bushra has a terrible relationship with Sharif Harir, the SLA/Unity External Relations chief. Jamous stated that his own focus will be to "lead SLM/Unity for the time being until it is stable and then I will go back to focusing on humanitarian affairs." Jamous stated that many of the movements' field commanders are very simplistic people "who only think of a car, house, and a pistol in their hand" and that these individuals require much attention from the political leadership. "We need to get our people thinking about the greater political goals of our movement," stated Jamous.

¶10. (SBU) Jamous said that his movement is almost self-reliant for supply, gaining weapons from raids on GoS installations. He did admit, however that "We get insignificant support from Libya and Chad and some support from private Chadian businessmen." Jamous stated he is going back to the field after the humanitarian seminar led by the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva scheduled in July. He said that he is in good health and that he will travel through Chad as "the GoS has some troops posted along the border with Libya."

COMMENT

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¶11. (SBU) Experienced Darfur observers such as the JMST's Muin Shrim have characterized SLA/Unity as "very well placed" to take a leading role in Darfur. This assessment was not apparent in the meetings with Hussein and Jamous. Although we should not downplay SLA/Unity based on one erratic personality, it is significant that Hussein serves as SLA/Unity's representative to the outside world, and that other more respectable leaders such as Jamous have not stepped up to correct or "rein in" Hussein. (Despite his rebel

involvement, respected international leaders such as Desmond Tutu have lavished Jamous with praise calling him "a champion of humanitarian principles and human rights.") Jamous also admitted (as stated in para 9) that SLA/Unity continues to have internal leadership struggles. JEM leaders and other competing movements continually point to this leadership struggle when describing SLA/Unity, and while their criticisms are often exaggerated, there does appear to be some truth to their claims. Yehia Bashir's call for greater inclusivity within SLA/AW makes sense and should be supported, as the arrogant and stubborn Abdul Wahid continues to reject interaction with the international community and other rebel movements.

FERNANDEZ